

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

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CHP SAYS TRAGIC FATHER'S DAY CRASH A REASON TO BUCKLE UP

"It's time to quit the excuses and buckle up" according to California Highway Patrol (CHP) Commissioner Dwight Helmick. This message comes in the wake of a tragic Southern California Father's Day crash which took the lives of six people. "Throw away excuses, break down bad habits and put that safety belt on – every time you get behind the wheel, for every passenger, no exceptions," the Commissioner said.

There were 10 vehicle occupants in a late-model van on a Mojave Desert freeway Sunday when the driver lost control, sending the vehicle into the center median where it overturned. Seven passengers not wearing safety belts were ejected, and five of them were killed. The three using safety belts stayed inside the vehicle, and two of them survived.

"If everyone had been wearing a safety belt, there's no doubt in my mind that the toll would have been much lower," Helmick continued. "Our experience, day in and day out, clearly shows that the odds of survival are much greater if you stay in the vehicle during a crash. Unfortunately, in this case, these people did not use their safety belts, with tragic results."

The CHP is also concerned with child safety seat misuse. "Children deserve the greatest protection available, and safety seats can provide that, but only if they are

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correctly used,” Commissioner Helmick said. “It is extremely important that parents or guardians carefully read the instructions that come with the seat and check the owner’s manual in their car as well. Without a properly attached seat, and a child who is correctly buckled in, you put him or her in great danger.”

Over 90 percent of Californians buckle up – more than any other state in the nation. “Now I want to see that other ten percent get on board. This crash should be a reality check for everyone who might still be wondering if a safety belt is worth it. I don’t want even one more person to suffer or die because they don’t buckle up. Take your life in your own hands – grab that safety belt and buckle up,” the Commissioner urged.

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RE: Associated Press - “Van crash kills 6, hurts 4 on Mojave Desert freeway”